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Trend full-time employment growth continues

Monthly trend full-time employment increased for the 11th straight month in August 2017, according to figures released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) today. Full-time employment grew by a further 22,000 persons in August, while part-time employment increased by 6,000 persons, underpinning a total increase in employment of 27,000 persons.

"Full-time employment has now increased by around 253,000 persons since August 2016, and makes up the majority of the 307,000 person increase in employment over the period," Chief Economist for the ABS, Bruce Hockman, said.

Over the past year, trend employment increased by 2.6 per cent, which is above the average year-on-year growth over the past 20 years (1.9 per cent).

The rate of employment growth (2.6 per cent) was greater than the growth in the population aged 15 years and over (1.7 per cent), which was reflected in an increase in the employment to population ratio (which is a measure of how employed the population is). This ratio increased by 0.6 percentage points since August 2016, up to 61.5. This is the highest it has been since February 2013.

Over the past year the three states and territories with the strongest growth in employment were Tasmania (4.0 per cent), Queensland (3.7 per cent) and Victoria (3.2 per cent).

The trend monthly hours worked increased by 3.9 million hours (0.23 per cent) to 1,708.6 million hours in August 2017.

The trend unemployment rate in Australia remained at 5.6 per cent in August 2017, and the labour force participation rate increased to 65.2 per cent, the highest it has been since April 2012.

The quarterly trend underemployment rate remained steady at 8.7 per cent over the quarter to August 2017 from a revised figure for May 2017 quarter.

"The underemployment rate is an important indicator of the spare capacity of workers in Australia, and it has remained at 8.7 per cent, a historical high, for the third consecutive quarter," Mr Hockman said.

The quarterly trend underutilisation rate, which includes both unemployment and underemployment, decreased by 0.1 percentage points to 14.2 per cent.

Trend series smooth the more volatile seasonally adjusted estimates and provide the best measure of the underlying behaviour of the labour market.

The seasonally adjusted number of persons employed increased by 54,200 in August 2017. The

seasonally adjusted unemployment rate remained steady at 5.6 per cent and the labour force participation rate increased to 65.3 per cent.

More details are in the August 2017 issue of Labour Force, Australia (cat. no. 6202.0). In addition, further information, including regional labour market information, can be found in the upcoming August 2017 issue of Labour Force, Australia, Detailed - Electronic Delivery (cat. no. 6291.0.55.001), due for release on 21 September 2017. Labour Force, Australia, Detailed, Quarterly (cat. no. 6291.0.55.003), which includes employment by industry, is also due for release on 21 September.

These publications are available for free download (after release) from the ABS website: <https://www.abs.gov.au>.

Media note:

- When reporting ABS data, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) must be attributed as the source.
- For media requests and interviews, contact the ABS Communications and Partnerships Section on 1300 175 070 (8.30am - 5pm Monday - Friday AEST).
- The ABS produces trend estimates to provide a more reliable indicator of the underlying behaviour of the Labour Force series. Trend estimates were introduced into the Labour Force series in the mid 1980s and are available back to February 1978. Trend estimates are considered the best indicators of the underlying behaviour in the labour market. See paragraphs 28 to 37 of the Explanatory Notes in Labour Force, Australia (cat. no. 6202.0).
- In simple terms, the ABS defines 'unemployment' as persons who are not working, are actively looking for work and available to start work in the survey reference week. 'Underemployment' refers to people who are working but would like to be working more hours. 'Underutilisation' refers to the combined unemployed and underemployed populations. Information on other related groups (eg. 'marginally attached' people) can be found in Participation, Job Search and Mobility (cat. no. 6226.0), available annually in respect of February.
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